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SUBJECT: CODEL NELSON: POLISH FM PRESSES FOR RESPONSE ON PATRIOTS

Classified By: Ambassador Victor Ashe

**¶1.** (C) SUMMARY. Foreign Minister Sikorski told Senator Nelson the GoP still hoped the Missile Defense (MD) agreement would be implemented, and said he was awaiting clarity regarding Patriot missiles. He said the Patriots should be deployed as originally intended -- not as a "sales promotion" or a training instrument, but as a demonstration of strong U.S.-Polish defense ties. Sikorski said the Patriot rotation, and the subsequent garrison, should build positive perceptions about the bilateral relationship, rather than reinforcing recent negative impressions. Sikorski appealed for help in bringing Poland into the U.S. Visa Waiver program; for U.S. contributions to an international Auschwitz preservation foundation; and a "re-launching" of the Community of Democracies initiative on its tenth anniversary. Senator Nelson agreed that NATO credibility was on the line in Afghanistan, and praised Polish troop increases there. He said the U.S. must not "cut a deal" with Russians on MD that would hurt Poland's interests, and emphasized that Russia has to accept MD, ideally as a contributor to the system. END SUMMARY.

HONORING ORIGINAL INTENTIONS RE: THE PATRIOTS

**¶2.** (C) During a June 29 meeting with Codel Nelson, Foreign Minister Sikorski asked about the latest U.S. thinking on Missile Defense (MD). The GoP had understood during the negotiating process that the next U.S. administration would be less enthusiastic about MD, but on balance, the Poles still believe the system should move forward, and NATO had officially "blessed" the program. Sikorski said he was looking forward to receiving a response to his letter to Secretary Clinton regarding U.S. plans to deploy a rotation of Patriot missiles in Poland. (NOTE: The Secretary's response was received the next day.) The rotation should take place as originally intended -- not as a "sales promotion" or for training purposes only, but as a sign of the strength of the U.S.-Polish defense relationship. Part of the mission of the battery in Germany is the defense of Israel; when transferred to Poland it should also have the capability to defend Poland. There needs to be an agreement on the details of the Patriot rotation; the discussions had not yet begun, but the GoP hoped the rotation would occur soon.

NEED TO IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

**¶3.** (C) Sikorski said the Patriot rotation should contribute to positive perceptions of the bilateral relationship. Unfortunately, Poles had been disappointed over commercial contracts that failed to materialize in Iraq, and by leaks about counterterrorism cooperation. Sikorski said the alleged secret U.S. prison camps in Poland did not exist, but

speculation that they did exist was coming out of U.S. agencies. Senator Nelson responded that the U.S. does not yet have the clear answer on MD that Poland needs. He understood some Poles are worried the U.S. could cut a deal with Russia at Poland's expense, but that must not be allowed to happen. He would not be surprised if the Russian Government withdrew its opposition to the MD program. If Russia took part in the program it would be good for Russia, the U.S., Poland and NATO. He would be meeting later with the Russian Ambassador to Poland and with a Russian Senator, and would make clear as always that Russia needs to accept the MD program, like it or not.

#### POLISH RESOLVE IN AFGHANISTAN

¶4. (SBU) On Afghanistan, Sikorski noted that Polish troop levels in ISAF had increased to 2,200, and he personally hoped there would be further increases next year. Poland had reduced its participation in UN missions, where there is no shortage of contributing countries, to focus on a place -- Southern Afghanistan -- where fresh troop offers are hard to come by. NATO must win in Afghanistan, since its credibility is at stake. Senator Nelson agreed that NATO must win in Afghanistan, and expressed appreciation for Poland's contributions in that country, as well as for previous Polish contributions in Iraq.

#### CONCERN ABOUT VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

¶5. (SBU) Sikorski expressed concern over Poland's ongoing exclusion from the U.S. visa waiver program, saying that Poles can travel everywhere else they wanted -- to Canada,

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Australia, other EU countries, etc. -- without visas. It is a shame that it is so much harder for Poles to travel to the U.S. than to the rest of Europe. In a reference to the requirement that visa applicants show strong ties to their country of origin, Sikorski noted that Polish emigrants are starting to return from the United States, because there are greater economic opportunities for them in their own country. With a playful smile, Sikorski noted that U.S. visa officers have the discretion to reduce the visa rejection rate to 10 percent, but have not done so.

#### PRESERVING AUSCHWITZ

¶6. (SBU) Referring to Prime Minister Tusk's letter to President Obama on the subject, Sikorski drew attention to the GoP request for U.S. contributions to a new fund for the preservation in perpetuity of the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Auschwitz infrastructure was not built to last, and the barracks needed to be restored. Poland had preserved the site since World War II and would continue to do so, but other countries should help; several countries have pledged contributions. Senator Nelson noted that the U.S. Congress had pledged financial support for the Warsaw museum of the History of Polish Jews, and he promised to explore the possibility of U.S. contributions to the Auschwitz Foundation as well. Ambassador Ashe underlined the intense interest of the American Jewish community in Auschwitz preservation efforts.

#### US-POLISH TEAMWORK ON COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

¶7. (SBU) Sikorski said he hoped the U.S. would join Poland in the "relaunching" of the Community of Democracies on the occasion of its tenth anniversary next year. The CD, initiated jointly by Poland and the U.S., combined U.S. power with recent Polish experience creating a democracy. The CD can create a new, democracy-based caucus at the UN to balance regional voting blocs. Practical projects include a CD handbook for diplomats and dissidents that shows how foreign ministries can support democratization. Poland is planning to host a meeting with Afghan women next year, since a key part of democracy is the protection of minorities, and women

are a strategic asset in democratization efforts. Poland is also planning a meeting of dissidents from countries like Burma, North Korea, Iran, Russia, and Cuba. Senator Nelson agreed that democracy is about more than elections, and said the international community needed to promote a more realistic concept of what democracy means.

#### POLISH FINANCES

**¶8. (SBU)** The Foreign Minister noted that his ministry had enacted painful cost-saving measures over the last year, and more were likely, in light of expected zero growth in Poland's GDP next year and some unfavorable currency exchange trends. Unlike the United States, the GoP had not opted for a stimulus package, but had sought to control deficits. The Senator noted that as a two-term governor of Nebraska, he had put together eight straight budgets without a deficit, and had left a surplus in the state treasury. He had helped lead a bipartisan Senate group that cut \$110 million in non-stimulative spending from a House of Representatives stimulus package.

Code1 Nelson has cleared on this cable.  
ASHE